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April 1979

THE STAR OF THE EAST

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an ecumenical journal dealing
specially with the oriental and
eastern orthodox churches.

P. O. Box 98, Kottayam — 686 001, Kerala, India

JOHN THOMAS, KARINGATTIL,
PANDALM. P. O.

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the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

SOPHIA CENTRE, ORTHODOX SEMINARY, P B. 98,
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JOHN THOMAS, KARINGATTIL,
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Editorial

There are moments in history when it behoves man to scan the horizon to see if there is any sign of a prophet beckoning us to a particular point in the horizon. We are living in one such. There is a general realization, at least among sensitive thinkers that the way we are now going is not quite right. But then neither can we put the brakes on; history is a vehicle without brakes. It seems to have a steering-wheel, but it is no power steering. In fact the steering rod is badly in need of oiling; it is slow in responding to our hard efforts to the course of history.

This Summer some Scientists and other thinkers are gathering together at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, U. S. A. to think about Faith, Science and Our Future for two weeks. Theology in general has not been much of a help (or a hindrance) in charting the course of world history. Here is a chance for it to come out with some wisdom. But it takes an enormous amount of optimism to hope that something will happen at M. I. T. from the side of theology.

Why talk about theology in general? Orthodox theology which often too lazily claims to have solved all problems, has hardly thrown any light on the problem areas that the M. I. T. Conference will be exploring. Orthodox theologians seem to be lazier than others in this as in other fields.

What indeed is faith? What is the difference between faith and that which is not faith? Where does science belong? Does it share some of the qualities of faith? What kind of truth does science unveil? How is that truth related to the truth of faith? Has science any right or duty to question faith, when it seems that men of faith would speak differently if they were not so ignorant?

What about the many scientists who regard the Church as unsympathetic to their problems and questions? Does the Church have a pastoral task to fulfil in relation to Christians who are practising scientists, and who would seldom darken the door of a Church because what goes on Sunday morning in our Churches sounds pretty irrelevant to them?

Science itself today is full of questions for which there are no "scientific" answers. But scientists do not want to present these questions to theologians because the latter have so far not manifested much interest or competence. If, on the other hand, the Churches could provide an arena and an atmosphere where Scientists could ask these questions among themselves (with some theologians and

ecclesiastics present—to lend colour and spirit!), that would itself help Perhaps that is all that the M. I. T. Conference could achieve.

A few of these questions are listed in a signed article which appears elsewhere in this issue. A more detailed discussion on some of the issues in an Indian context by a panel of Indian experts has been published by the Christian Literature Society.*

The contribution of Orthodox theology may lie perhaps not in providing specific answers to ethical issues posed by modern science and technology, but in providing a theologically profound vision of (or frame work for beholding) reality within which these ethical questions can be more meaningfully faced. Even that task has only been partially undertaken by Orthodox theology. Perhaps the Conference will trigger off some ecumenical discussion, which will stimulate Orthodox theology to a greater effort in this direction.

Pope John Paul II and The Conference of Latin American Bishops.

The third conference of Latin American bishops (Roman Catholic), concluded its meeting at Puebla, Mexico, on February 13th. For the Roman Catholic Church, the Latin American continent is more important even than Europe. According to 1975 estimates the Christian population of South America was 168.62 million of which 164.53 million were Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox being only 3.68 million and 50,000 respectively; whereas in Europe, out of an estimated 407.72 million Christians, Roman Catholics were 190.49 million, Protestants 124.3 million and Orthodox 92.93 million.

Latin America is a "Christian Continent" (population 204.75 millions in 1975 of which 82% is Christian) and a "Roman Catholic Continent" (92% of all Christians). The total life of South American and Central American Churches is thus pervaded by the moral influence of the Roman Catholic Church as well as by its economic and political power.

The Second Conference in Medellin, inaugurated by the late Pope Paul VI was a major milestone in modern Latin American Church history. The bishops pronounced themselves in favour of the theological and economic efforts to liberate Latin America from the neo-colonial yoke.

Pope John Paul's opening address at the Puebla meeting was badly mis-represented in the secular world press. What he said about Latin American Liberation Theology was simply that no theology should use easy short cuts, like conceiving Jesus as a political revolutionary and thereby regarding the main task of Church as political and economic liberation. As the Pope stated when he came back to Rome, citing Galatians 5:1.

"Liberation, then is certainly a reality of faith, one of the fundamental biblical themes, which are a deep part of Christ's salvific mission".....

But then he goes on to define liberation in a rather limited way:

"Liberation means man's inner transformation, which is a consequence of the knowledge of truth. The transformation is, therefore, a spiritual process, in which man matures "in true righteousness and holiness". (Eph.4:24)

* Paulos Mar Gregorios, (Ed), *Science and Our Future*, C. L. S. Madras, 1978.

He was speaking to a General Audience in Rome on February 21st and did not work out the meaning of liberation in a sufficiently extended way.

But here some theological work still needs to be done. We of the Eastern Orthodox tradition have a great heritage of "Liberation" and "Freedom" as the central categories—not merely a 'deep part' of our understanding creation and redemption. The Pope's point is well taken. Man has both a historical and a "Supertemporal" dimension of existence as Pope John Paul II said. But how they are related is the moot question.

In the Eastern theological tradition, *eleutheria* or freedom is the very spring of God's creative action as it continues to this day, and the freedom of humanity and the creation as a whole from the power of evil and of death is the whole point of the historical drama.

The Church has failed to do a proper job in analyzing the social structure of evil and death—or anti-good and anti-life. The Latin American liberation theologians have opened up for Christians something of that structure as they experience it. They may be shallow in their analysis, and naive in their proposing certain solutions. If only the Pope could have encouraged them a bit by acknowledging the element of truth in their contention that economic oppression and exploitation is a 'deep part' of the structure of anti-good and anti-life today!

The Pope gave evidence of having been deeply impressed with the poverty and misery of the Mexican millions. Obviously it was a great experience for him, and he has clearly stated that more than words are needed to clear away this misery. Mexico with its oil boom has a structure that permits the prevalence of such misery. We hope that the Pope's inhibitions about being misunderstood will not stand in the way of a more forthright word and action in favour of changing oppressive and exploitative structures. The Roman Catholic poor of South America are thirsting for such a word.

The Pope's forthcoming visit to his own homeland is going to be a similar occasion when his mettle will be tested. Even if he does not utter a word, the enthusiastic reception that will be given by the faithful of a Catholic Poland under Communist Government to "their" pope will cause quite a shake-up in Poland. Will he use his visit as another step in Cold War propaganda and anti-communist sophistry remains to be seen. There is no doubt that Pope John Paul II has enormous energy and means business. Let us all pray that energy will be used in the service of God and of the oppressed.

What is the Future of Man?

Very Revd. K. G. George Ramban.

Once man's progress and development in different aspects of life made him feel to think that his life is secure. But as time passes on many experts of science, technology, philosophy, sociology, etc are compelled to rethink the process of the progress of human material life. This is due to the unexpected and unpredictable problems and dangers arising from the development of science and Technology. Though man has achieved great things in Science and Technology to solve the problem of man, the same achievement has compelled him to look into the future of man to what it will lead him to. Towards a better humanity or destruction of humanity?

1. The Secular Vision of the Future

The Science of futurology is an important field of research. In the universities of U. S. A. it is given so much prominence. No aspect of life is left out from the research analysis—home, family, work, life style, technology, energy, population, the cities, farm, the media etc. Those who are engaged in this study try to predict the problem of this age or of future based on the analysis of the mathematical models. The futurologist's work has been formerly done by the astrologers and seers. But there is a vast difference between the productions of the astrologers and of the futurists.

Today, futurists use scientific methods and other means of sophisticated computers to predict the future. The problem they try to solve is what man must do to avoid the bad and the good for building up a secure future.

There is a society known as "World Future Society," founded in Washington in 1966. This is a forum for intellectuals to exchange ideas about the future of man. There was a conference in 1975 convened by this society, attended by 2000 futurologists. The conclusion of this conference is as follows:

"In this short time (25 years) the human race may wipe itself out through war or destruction of its natural environment. On the other hand, the next quarter century could be a period when human beings join to create a global civilization happier and more productive than ever."

These two important futurologists, whose views about the future could be summarised as follows.

A. Buckminster Fuller is a pessimist who thinks that Humanity's chances are fifty-fifty. The following arguments are put forward to support his views.

- (1) A better future could be developed only on the basis of equal distribution of resources. Otherwise the rich will grow richer, the poor will grow poorer. But this idealised concept of equal distribution is impossible as the resources are nonrenewable and limited and thus the room of the earth is limited.
- (2) The result of increased use of new technology to extract more resources would lead to the growth of pollution and the exhaustion of resources. Moreover vast capital investment would not multiply the returns.
- (3) Due to the rapidity of change, the growing problems and vested interests would prevent the effective use of resources and the control of pollution.
- (4) As the exploitation of natural resources increases, many key resources will soon be seriously depleted.
- (5) It is becoming impossible to limit the expansion which is in growth irrespective of the increase of population. If the uncontrollable expansion is not prevented, man will have to face a tragic situation arising out of resource limitation and of the problems of pollution growth.
- (6) As new resources, new technologies may make feel man as on the safer path and prevent him from applying the drastic actions against expansion. But the problem of existence of humanity demand immediate restraint and cut backs. The widening gap of income existing in domestic and international levels is a great danger. It would lead to class wars or political crises.

Based on the facts the pessimist futurologists predict that unless radical changes are made soon the future of humanity is in danger. Because large scale damage of the environment is running the ecology of many areas. Billions will die of hunger, pollution or wars over the decreasing resources. Many will be suppressed by the iron handed governments. So to alleviate the extent and intensity of the future collapse, what is required Draconian measures.

B. Herman Kahn who is an optimist about the future of man. He and his followers uphold a bright future of man based on the following arguments.

- (1) As the quantity of natural resources is not known, it is wrong to be pessimistic about the future. So it is impossible to hold the equality of distribution as newer and newer resources, for building up a better society, are discovered.

- (2) The returns will be increasing as new technology and capital investment are utilized. But it is necessary to protect and improve the environment and to avoid misunderstood innovations or inappropriate growth resulting in ecological problems.
- (3) The rapidity of growth will not hinder the effective management control of pollution, the equality of distribution arising out of vested interests. What is required is control of price through proper market mechanisms, public regulations and international co-operations.
- (4) Using new technological methods it is possible to produce adequate resources. Therefore there should not be any control over the rate of growth.
- (5) The growth of production through faster than population growth, would gradually come to the level of population.
- (6) The value of progress of new technology and the use of new resources would be enormous in the economic growth which is essential to solve problems, improve efficiency and upgrade the quality of life. The economic stability would relieve society from bad luck or incompetency.
- (7) It would be possible to fill the gap of income among the richer and poorer nations. Moreover the growth of technology would abolish poverty.
- (8) Though there may be many tragic mistakes, much sufferings and damage in the period of historical transition to a materially abundant life, the ultimate future of man would be free from poverty and scarcity. Thus the 21st century would be an era of prosperity for humanity.

The two views about the future are that of scientists, philosophers, etc, ie of men of secular thinking. The one exhorts to have control over science and technology to avert the immediate impending doom of humanity. The other one persuades to forge ahead with science and technology in order to secure a bright future. But the problem is if any one of them is the proper solution to the problems confronting the present and the future generations of humanity.

II. An Ecumenical Vision of the Future

The Christian approach to the problem of the future of man is discussed in a conference on Science and Technology for 'Human Development' held in Bucharest, Romania, 1974. The discussion was what would be the meaning of technological developments for human life, for creating greater justice in society, and for relevant

and meaningful interpretation of the Christian faith. The conference made the following conclusions:

- (1) The concept of a 'Sustainable Society' is developed. It means that it is necessary to keep some kind of equilibrium between the world's economic possibilities and its material requirements. As the prevention of the uncontrolled growth of technology, which results in environmental problems, is necessary, it is also essential to make use of science and technology for the uplift of the poor sections and regions of the world.
- (2) The technological goal for the future must be utilized to develop a new society in which greater social justice should be ascertained. The rich countries must be prepared to share not only the technological know-how but also what it produces with poor countries. It is the ideology of consumerism, which dominates the richer countries, compels the developed countries to exploit the poorer sections and regions of the world to extract more resources and to sell their products. The affluence reaped from such an ideology results in major ethical and social problems both in the developed and undeveloped countries. The concept of material progress, accepted on capitalist and socialist countries, is steadily achieving material welfare for its own people even at the expense of other nations, can never be tolerated and this attitude, will not help the development of a better future for man.
- (3) The present material growth helps only to develop the material aspects of man. But it is not at all useful to create any inner change in man. So a material growth without inner change will not help to develop a better future. It will not help to achieve economic and social justice. Such a material progress will create innumerable moral and ethical problems which already plague the present society. Because of these reasons it is greatly emphasized that a better future or even the existence of humanity could be achieved only with improving the quality of human life. To increase the quantity of life without its quality means the doom of humanity.

From the above discussions it is obvious that the problem of future is a matter of great concern. A secular approach to this problem is either pessimistic or optimistic. A Christian attitude towards this problem is very cautious. The Christian view is that the existence of humanity depends on: (1) restrained use of technology and science, (2) its availability for poor countries, (3) The increase of the quality of life together with the growth of material progress,

After pointing out these facts, let me emphasise what the Orthodox church can contribute to this problem of man's future. The Protestant or Catholic view of man and world will not be helpful because it is only partial. Once the Protestant and Catholic theologians emphasized only the spiritual (soul) aspect of man as essential. But as secularism and technology began to develop, the Catholic and Protestant theologians, have started to emphasise only the material aspect of man as essential and it must be solved with the help of science and technology. Now this material progress is seen as process of salvation.

Teilhard de Chardan, a great Catholic philosopher and theologian conceived every change in society as the process of evolution leading up to the fulfilment in Christ. Such a view is rather unchristian because only proper and right changes will help humanity in obtaining fulfilment in Christ.

The Orthodox view of man is not changing with the changes of secular ideas. Man is seen as a composite being made of soul and body. So in Orthodox view soul and body are important. That means the spiritual growth as well as the material progress are essential for rescuing man from the path of destruction. Thus the Orthodox church emphasises the necessity for improving to the quality of life which is also accepted as essential and inevitable by the conference of church and society held in Bucharest.

To build up a better future what is necessary is to accept the following facts as always stressed in the theological understanding of the Orthodox church.

- (1) It is important to recognize that matter is also to be redeemed, sanctified and transformed. This is the part of message of the event of transfiguration on Mount Taboor. The idea, that matter is for man's consumption and for his satisfaction, is to be discarded.
- (2) Though it is essential to plan for a bright future, man must not conceive this planning as the ultimate goal of man. Because the Christian hope is to reach the goal of resurrection and transformation of man and world. It is with this hope of ultimate destiny of man and world, that man should try for a better society where equality, morality and social justice will succeed. The lack of vision of this hope in Christ's resurrection places man in a state of despondency or over confidence which is detrimental for man's future.
- (3) Only a deep faith in Christ can help man to control and utilize science and technology for man's balanced progress. Man's ability and natural resources alone will not help him to solve the present and future problems arising out of faster growth of science and technology.

- (4) There is a cry for structural change for ascertaining equality and social justice. Neither Capitalism nor Socialism or Democracy is the answer to the urging need of structural change. It is true the present trend in the world can lead up to class-war. But that will not change the structure of society required for preserving humanity from self destruction. Though the structure is changing in an age of science and technology it is not affecting the change of man. Different political structures in the world, though succeed in solving the problems of humanity, have not succeeded in transforming the life of man. The man, in changed structures, remains unchanged. Some believe total abolition of rich people as a solution. What is essential is a power that can change the structure together with transformation of man. What is this power? Is it not the power of the holy spirit.

There is no need to be afraid of the limited resources, if man finds his hope in Christ who fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes. That means the power of God can remove the limitation of matter, which is the result of the sin of man with the transformation of man and society by the power of Holy Spirit, matter also could be redeemed from its limitation and be transformed for the well being of man. So the Orthodox faith always emphasised, still emphasises, and will continue to emphasise that Christ is the answer for the present and the future problems of man. Above all, Christ is the only answer for the ultimate destiny of man. Only with this hope in the ultimate destiny of man in Christ's resurrection, he could face life and its problems.

Science, Faith and Our Future*

Some issues to be taken up by the forthcoming World Conference on Faith, Science and the Future organised by the World Council of Churches.

(METROPOLITAN DR. PAUL GREGORIOS)

Introduction: Science as authority and hope.

Science to many people in the 20th Century, has begun to function almost like religious faith in previous centuries. Both authority and hope used to be associated with religious faith in earlier societies. Today it is the scientist who has authority. His word, of course based on experiments which have satisfied the requirements of the scientific community, is then accepted by many as truth, without having themselves attempted any experimental demonstration. Today if a scientist says something pre-posterous, like, for example, that the intelligence quotient of British people has dropped several points because of too much lead in their bio-systems¹, this is accepted as truth. If another Scientist then offers a technique to take out the lead from children's systems, immediately people pay for it with the same eagerness with which people bought indulgences in the Sixteenth Century.

Science is also the ground of hope to many in our society. Especially in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, there seems to be the feeling that science and technology will solve all their problems. This is the context in which, a month after the W. C. C. Conference on "The contribution of faith, science, and technology in the struggle for a just, participatory and sustainable Society" (Cambridge, Massachusetts, July 12-24, 1979), the U. N. will be organising its own Conference in Vienna (August 20-31, 1979) on Science and Technology for development. The U. N. Conference will be concentrating on making science and technology available for the process of economic development in the industrially less advanced countries of the world. They will not be able to raise the fundamental questions of values and ethics, because of the political set-up of the U. N.

* A lecture delivered at the University of Hamburg, Germany, April 1979.

1. The statement has actually been made by Dr. D. Bryce-Smith, a British Scientist, in a paper presented at the 49th Congress of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (Auckland, 1979).

The W. C. C. Conference thus becomes crucial in raising some of the key questions that people all over the world need to ask about Science and Technology. There is no guarantee that all the necessary questions will be raised at M. I. T. Scientists are even cleverer than theologians² in avoiding issues, and in proceeding as if everything were all right in science.

I would like to raise here five questions before the W. C. C. Conference. Some of these I know will be taken up. One or two of these I am afraid will be overlooked or neglected by the Conference. I want to make it clear at this point that I do not speak in this paper as Chairman of this Conference on Faith, Science and the Future, but in my private capacity as a person concerned about these issues.

1. The Nuclear Energy Issue

This is one issue that will certainly not be overlooked. The W. C. C. has done some very high quality work on the nuclear energy issue, and its Sigtuna (Sweden) hearing brought together some of the world's leading experts in the field. There the experts gave the verdict generally in favour of developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, provided adequate safeguards for waste disposal were available. This view was, of course, not universally accepted. The Central Committee of the W. C. C. in its Geneva (August 1977) meeting asked the W. C. C. Sub-unit on Church and Society to take into account of the issues raised in the various nuclear protest demonstrations in Europe and elsewhere, and to hold a fresh consultation with a "balanced representation, i.e. pro-anti and undecided positions on the nuclear issue". We invited a number of experts and a number of protestors to the Second Consultation (May 2nd to 7th, 1978) at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey. From Germany we had Prof. Klaus Koch as a theologian who is neither pro nor anti, Dr. Gunter Kessler from the Projekt Schneller Bruter at the Kernforschungszentrum of Karlsruhe, Dr. Ulrich Ratsch, a Physicist from the Energy Study Group of the Evangelical Study Institute in Heidelberg, Dr. Ingrid Klaus Scharmer from the International Bureau der Kernforschungsanlage in Jülich, Mr. Helmut Milcke from Brot für die Welt and Volker Schmidt from Hamburg. Ratsch, Milcke, and Schmidt took a clear anti-nuclear position.

The arguments on the two sides are not easy to summarize. One line of argument goes like this:

"Future energy needs of humanity are frighteningly high. Unless we do something now, by 2025 A. D. the situation will be

2. I do not regard theologians as scientists, and at this point disagree with Prof. Pannenberg and many others.

catastrophic. By 1980 there will be a shortage of 10×10^{16} Kilojoules of energy to be generated by other than fossil fuels. This gap (about a third of the total need) cannot be hydro-electricity alone. By 2025 the shortage will be in the neighbourhood of 50×10^{16} Kilojoules, when fossil fuels can supply only half their present output.

"The only viable option is to go for nuclear energy on a large scale, now. There is no time to wait and see. Alternate sources of energy should be developed especially for space and water heating. Fossil fuels will continue to be needed for portable energy. But the main needs of industry, lighting, cooking, etc., can be met only by developing nuclear energy. There are risks and some technical problems to be solved. But the risks of not developing nuclear energy are even greater. Oil and gas supplies are limited, and it is extremely risky to promote their unplanned and excessive use.

"As for the various technologies of developing nuclear energy, fusion technology when developed, can be expected to clean (unpolluting) and problem-free. But that will take time, even to perfect the technology. As for fission, the Light Water Reactor (non-breeder) has some problems about fuel disposal; but even greater is the problem of countries which are dependent on others for their uranium supply. As for Fast Breeder Reactors, there are still technical problems to be resolved, and commercial exploitation of this technology will have to wait till these are resolved. The Liquid Metal Fast breeder Reactor demands high Capital outlay and is not economical at today's Uranium prices; they take 15-30 years to develop, and the price situation may change drastically in that period. The LMFBR is a guarantee against rising uranium prices and affords fuel independence. But it produces materials which can be used for nuclear weapons and this is another risk.

"A less risky option is to continue to use Thermal Reactors, with an adequate Uranium stock-pile, and an improved 'once-through' fuel cycle (fuel used only once and not reprocessed). There are new options like the Canadian Heavy Water Reactor or the High Temperature gas-cooled reactor (HTGCR).

"In any case, *no* nuclear energy seems more risky than going ahead with thermal reactors with adequate reactor safety and waste disposal safeguards".

Others would argue for a more forthright approach. An LMFBR does not produce more plutonium than today's Commercial thermal reactors, they argue. They would also argue that storage of spent fuel is more risky than Breeders. Existing reactors can utilise only about 1% of the Uranium found in nature. Breeders can raise the use-value to 50 % of natural uranium.

The opponents of nuclear energy in general use three basic arguments:

- (a) risks and hazards
- (b) proliferation
- (c) over-industrialization

Technical experts have been telling us for a long time that anxiety about reactor safety and fuel storage radiation hazard is vastly exaggerated. This argument has lost its force since the accident at Three Miles Island Thermal Reactor near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in the last week of March 1979. A hydrogen bubble developed in the cooling process. About a fourth of the fuel rods in the reactor had already been damaged by the heat; new and deadly elements like Cesium-137 and Strontium-90 had been released into water and air around the plant. These elements are highly radio-active, extremely toxic, and have a long life of several thousands of years. What is worse, the presence of these elements in the cooling water is evidence that the plant was already over-heated; there was a danger of melt-down, which could have had disastrous consequences for the whole of humanity.

As this accident becomes known, the anti-nuclear lobby will no doubt gain strength.

The dangers of radiation and weapons proliferation are there. An ordinary 1000 mega-watt LMFBR will have about 3 to 5 tons of plutonium—an element so toxic that a particle as large as a grain of pollen floating in the air can cause lung cancer if inhaled. It has a half-life of 500,000 years, i. e. it can be continue to kill and maim so long as it is in air and water, for ever and ever. There are 63 nuclear plants now operating in the U. S. A., at least 13 in West Germany, 32 in the U. K. and about 200 in the world today. The nuclear industries of industrially developed countries are seeking to make big business out of this.

The nuclear issue is far from resolved. Our young people are saying that, quite apart from hazards of radiation and weapons proliferation, we should think about the question—do we need the kind of society that needs all this energy? Can we not use the energy issue to force ourselves to devise an alternate way of living with less energy consumption, less material commodities consumption, more production of cultural and spiritual commodities? This issue will be at the centre of the debate at M. I. T. this summer.

2. Bio Ethics

Here the issues are well known, and can be presented in a brief compass. Genetic manipulation is one of the most topical ethical issues.

We can today manipulate bacterial, plant and perhaps some animal cells by micro-surgery on the genome, or the set of chromosomes containing genes in each cell nucleus of a species. We have broken the information-carrying code of the DNA (de-oxyribonucleic acid), but any alteration in DNA molecules has to be transmitted to the RNA (ribonucleic acid) molecules and from there to the protein molecules through which the genetic information functions. This transmission technique is still to be devised to full satisfaction.

In November 1977, a joint research project in California made 5 milligrammes of Somatostatin, a hormone in the human brain, through an artificial gene created by three scientists—Boyer, Riggs and Vale. They introduced the gene sequence of Somatostatin into a bacterium (E. Coli K 12) which then produced a protein bearing Somatostatin, and from which this hormone could be removed.

These and other developments in Genetic science/technology have raised some standard questions and some new questions. Examples:

- (a) It is now possible to prognosticate genetic defects in a human embryo in the 14th week of pregnancy, through an examination of the amniotic fluid. Does detection of genetic defect automatically indicate pre-natal abortion? Are genetically defective human beings human? Do genetically defective embryos have a right to be born and to live? Who decides? On what principles?
- (b) Can the Scientist be permitted to do unregulated research on genetic mutation of bacteria? Suppose a scientist engineers the creation of a bacteria that causes frightful diseases and yet is immune to all known anti-biotics? Can we let genetic research go on uncontrolled by social structures?
- (c) If genetic defect does not make a person sub-human, then what is the norm for a human being? What aspects of the human person are worth improving through genetic manipulation? health? intelligence quotient? Does this mean that the less healthy and the less intelligent are less than human?
- (d) Claims have been made, though disputed, that the cloning of a human being has already been achieved. Whether this is true or not, the technology for it seems to be available. What are the ethics of cloning or reproduction of exact replicas?
- (e) Can we make a social decision that human reproduction be more completely regulated, in such a way that only the "best stocks" are allowed to reproduce, while the less endowed will gradually cease to exist by not being allowed to reproduce? Would this not improve the over-all quality of humanity and lead to much more accelerated progress of humankind?

These are only samples of some of the issues which could surface at the M. I. T. Conference.

3. The God—Man—Nature Issue

This is not, as may seem at first, one of the games theologians play. It is the issue at the heart of our present civilization—a western civilization which is becoming increasingly universal.

Science by its very nature has operated on a bi-polar basis, the knowing subject, man, and the known subject, the world. At least in the early period, the search was for greater objectivity; the assumption was that reality existed out there, independently of any subjective perception of it, and that it could be known as it really is. Immanuel Kant has only recently become acceptable to scientists. The Kantian idea that all rational preception is inevitably subjective, objective, and there is no way of knowing reality with total objectivity, remained, for too many scientists, a mere philosophical dictum.

The medieval European world lived in a three-tier system—God, Man and world. The so-called Enlightenment reduced reality to two tiers, man and world. The secular movement and the movement of scientific rationalism reinforced each other. Today, most people trained in the western educational system, operate on the binary system of Man—World rather than on the three-tier system of God—Man—World. Our academic institutions have also made this assumption, and the presence of a theological faculty in a university remains something of an anomaly.

Trained in this binary system provided by science and secular rationality, man proceeded to the mindless exploitation of the world. He made three assumptions—that Man was at least potentially master of the Universe in his own right; that man was capable of comprehending reality through the application of his rational mind; and that all problems could be solved by science/technology which helps man to achieve mastery of the world.

All these assumptions have depended on a binary view of reality. Our culture, despite its religious trimmings and trappings, is a binary culture with only two realities—man and world, the knowing and manipulating subject, and the known and manipulated world.

Questioning the binary view of reality has become necessary precisely because it is this mindless manipulation of our environment as if there were nobody else around to check us, that has led to the ecological crisis. We have seen on the one hand that man and world are not two realities but one; the one is shaped and formed by the other. What affects one affects the other. In western culture there is the beginning of a move towards an "inclusive view of nature"

(i.e. that man is part of nature) as a corrective to the old exclusive view of nature which regarded man and nature as separate and distinct entities.

The other movement, i.e. the recognition that neither man nor nature can exist in their own right, that there is no such thing as "nature" which generates itself, that there is only a creation which cannot exist except by contingent dependence on the Creator—this movement is yet to gain strength. Western theology has erred too strongly in emphasizing the separation between God, Man and the World, between God, History and Nature. A more unifying view would be against the fundamental assumptions of our scientific-secular culture. But that view must be developed by western theology and by western secular philosophy and literature, and it must penetrate also the world of science.

This issue is on the agenda of the M. I. T. Conference both in plenary and in sections. How deeply it will be treated there remains to be seen. Some preparatory material has been produced, including an issue of *ANTICIPATION* and the present author's own work on *The Human Presence*³. But the deeper reflection has much further to go.

4. Science and Faith

In the issue of Science and Faith it is hoped that the M. I. T. Conference will be able at least to reformulate the issue between Science and Faith, without going in to the old polemics of Creation versus Evolution. Some of the questions that are being asked are:

- (a) Are science and faith two ways of approaching reality? If so, what is common to the two ways and what is distinct?
- (b) Are they both sufficiently mature to give up polemic and try to co-operate, especially in facing the ethical issues posed by and in the practice of science/technology?
- (c) Does science have something critical to say about faith and theology and are these latter willing to listen to this critique? And does faith have something significant to say to science/technology?

These questions will be on the agenda of both plenaries and sections. Perhaps the reformulation and further elaboration of the questions involved are all we can hope for. Science is no longer regarded by many philosophers of science as proved or objective truth. It is composed of a cluster of hypotheses which work. Is not faith also something similar? There is agreement neither on what science is, nor on what faith is. Will the M. I. T. Conference be able to throw new light or bring fresh agreement on these issues?

5. Science and Ideology

The question whether the scientific technological enterprise creates its own values and thereby transforms culture in the direction of these values has long been debated. No one is today naive enough to say that there are two distinct "cultures"—one of science/technology and the other of art and literature. Nor we say that science and technology are totally value-free, and that values enter only into the use of science.

One of the major assumptions in some western thought is that of a technological revolution that transforms society by its own dynamic. As Christopher Lasch says:

"The notion of technological determinism has dominated popular understanding of the industrial revolution. Changes in technology are assumed to have been the principal cause of industrialization, and the whole process is seen purely as a technological revolution".⁴

The clear argument of David Noble's *America by Design* is that technological changes had revolutionary effects in the 18th and 19th centuries only because they were part of a political and social revolution, i.e. a change in the class that held power. Arbitrary authority exercised by kings and nobles began to be overthrown; the bourgeoisie began to come into power through the system of liberal democracy; a landless proletariat emerged; the worker was separated from his tools by the factory system.

Following this first phase, the Capitalist began expropriating the fruit of the worker's labour and to build up capital; later by breaking up the job of production into several small pieces, he gradually expropriated the worker's technical knowledge, to produce something also. The worker, having lost both tool and knowledge, was no longer master of production. The last stage came with the managerial revolution, when the "personnel" was "managed" in a scientific/technological way, labour thus being reduced to an object to be managed and manipulated.

The so-called technological process cannot be understood apart from this accompanying political, economic and social changes. What is decisive today is the relation between scientific technology, corporate capitalism and the bourgeois state—how these three elements collaborate in the interests of a privileged class. It is not the dynamic of technology as such that does it, but the political economic framework within which technology develops. As Noble

4. Forward in David F. Noble's *America by Design—Science, Technology and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism*, Alfred A. Knopf, N. Y. 1977, p. XI.

says in his introduction, technology is *not* "something other than human, a disembodied historical force impinging upon the affairs of men".⁵

Technology affects political economy and vice versa. The relationship is dialectic. The two—science/technology and political economy—are merely two poles of a single process, the process of social production.

Science/technology does not automatically liberate man. In our societies we are observing that technology in fact promotes unfreedom in more than one way. So long as technology remains in the hands of Corporate Capitalism, the liberation of humanity is likely to lag behind. Instead of liberating humankind from the shackles of Capitalist oppression and exploitation, technology reinforce the Capitalist system, making it more powerful and vast-witness the trans-national corporations.

Technology today is engineering—that is manipulation of matter and manipulation of human beings—technical engineering and social engineering. But the engineers themselves are today a privileged class, and their privileges are dependent on the Corporate Capitalist system. Professor Noble documents Marx's thesis that "modern industry..... makes science a productive force distinct from labour and presses it into the service of capital". This is done through the development of science-based industry, through the development of higher technical education at university level and through the emergence of engineers of matter and men.

Technology thus perpetuates unfreedom, not because of its very nature, but because it develops in the oppressive exploitative systems of Corporate Capitalism. But the State and the University are agents of Corporate Capitalism, dependent on Capitalism for its very sustenance. Whether in Germany or in India, no strong political party can financially survive without the support of Corporate Capitalism. The States and the Corporations provide funds for the University which is now the servant of Corporate Capitalism, producing trained and efficient managers of men and matter, as well as people for other auxiliary services that fit into a system dominated by Corporate Capitalism.

This alliance between Corporate Capitalism, the bourgeois state, and the captive University seems to be the framework which accounts for much of the negative impact of science/technology. The three co-operate in keeping human beings in bondage, by creating ideological smoke-screens which divert attention from the central issues. The university spins economic theories which keep economics and

5. op. cit. intro. pp xviii—xix.

politics separated from each other, which emphasize increased production and increased profit for the Capitalist at the expense of distributive justice, and which by creating in-put/out-put models of production which can be programmed into computers obscure the impact of the production process on the people. The university co-operates with the bourgeois state and with Corporate Capitalism by supporting liberal-democratic values of the middle class like individual human rights at the expense of the right to work and right to live with dignity.

The M. I. T. is one of the pioneers of the world in the process of co-opting the university as a partner of Corporate Capitalism; under the guise of bringing technology and the humanities into a forced wedding, academic institutions merely pander to Corporate Capitalism by supplying it with the knowledge and the trained brains to run the systems.

Conclusion

The University has a key role to play in this whole debate. It is because the University has also become a place of privilege, a vested interest in the system, that it is now unable to raise these issues adequately. Many universities will probably collapse if they raise these issues at sufficient depth. Does not the message of the cross insist that is only through such death that life comes?

The power of Science as source of authority and hope is likely to erode substantially in the future. This does not mean that people will turn to faith automatically as the source of authority and hope. Faith will have to re-earn that privilege.

Our Theological Task In India: An Indian Orthodox Reflection.

Dn. Jacob Kurien

There had been many attempts at formulating theological foundations suited to India. Some of them were based on an assumption that a translation of the Western interpretation of Christian faith into Indian religious and philosophical *terms* and *categories* was the prime task of theology. Later, some *concepts* of philosophical or devotional Hinduism were used to translate certain western systems of Christian theology, like Thomism. The Madras Rethinking Group protested against such wishy-washy attempts. One of its representatives wrote:

"Indian Christian theology is not a translation into Indian tongues of the theological text books in European languages. Nor is it an interpretation of Christianity in the idiom and concepts of other religions".¹

But they also tend to limit the theological context to Hinduism and in particular to its Philosophy. Similar was the problem with some Roman Catholic attempts to find a 'Hindu-Christian Meeting point', perhaps at the mystical level. Some of the contemporary Christian theological interpretations start from another point. They seem to have taken the historical dimension of the gospel seriously and try to relate it to the struggle for 'humanisation' or 'quality of life'. But our task in India is not that simple nor is our theological context is so one-sided. Here we would like to present two basic assumption of this paper.

1. Indian Christianity has two main traditions behind it, Western and Eastern. The majority of Indian Christians inherit the Western tradition while a significant minority inherit an ancient Eastern tradition. It is a fact that a certain amount of the traditional influences whether Western or Eastern is already imbibed in our lives even without our knowledge. It will be an utopian idea if we are required to part with all our in born traditional influences and to start with a 'raw fact of Christ'. But at the same time

1. P. Chenchiah. "Our Theological task.....,"
Guardian, Feb., 6 x. 1947

we have to recognise that so far as these influences dominate our thinking and life, we have difficulty in presenting an effective Christian witness. Now, what is the alternative? Then Western-Eastern cultural and philosophical diversity was a recognized reality in the early undivided Church. This diversity did not strain the witness of the Church at that time. But later in the post-Chalcedonian period we notice a number of other factors getting mixed up with these traditions and hampering the effective witness of the Church. If this fact is recognized we have to develop a renewed interest in the pre-Chalcedonian state of the Church. We are not pleading for a 'return' but only suggesting a 'renewal' of our theological thinking on the basis of an authentic Christian tradition of the early Church where we find the peaceful co-existence of eastern and western elements. In other words, for an integral theological approach in India, a study of the life-witness and writings of the Christian Fathers in the pre-Chalcedonian Church would be most beneficial. If, we, Indian Christians aspire to have a common theological footing, it could be the Patristic tradition of the undivided Church of the pre-Chalcedonian period. An unbiased study of the Fathers will reveal the fact that they had two main objectives: (i) to establish theologically the reality of the world and human life with its demands for a just ethical order, against the contrary aspirations of the Gnostics; (ii) to prove that the spirit of the Gospel can be enfolded in the cultural and philosophical background of the Romans and the Greeks. These facts themselves will suggest how the Patristic tradition could be a guide, if not a model, for the Christian theological task in India. Moreover certain pioneering attempts in relating the Patristic thought to the Indian situation have shown that at least in the spiritual and philosophical outlooks they have much in common and this commonness is deeper and more illuminating than the findings in many other comparative studies.

2. The contemporary Indian situation is much different from that of 17th or 18th century India. Not only has religion lost its absolute claim in most phases of life, but also the nature of 'Religion' has changed a lot. We can no longer limit the Indian situation to classical spiritual and philosophical Hinduism. Many secular and religious movements of various kinds fight for justice and equality. Hinduism is not the only religion of India and Vedantic philosophy is not the only Hindu philosophical system of India. More than all, religion at the popular level is much different from that at the intellectual level. Popular religious life including the tribal forms, is more influential in India than the philosophical religious life. In brief, the Indian situation is so complex that it includes many religious traditions with both popular and philosophical phases, and many secular and semi-secular peoples' movements for liberation and development.

The above two assumptions would demand a suitable theological framework which could accommodate the East and the West in Christian tradition on the one hand, and the philosophical and popular religions as well as genuine humanistic struggles in India on the other. One would here just pin-point certain aspects of this theological framework. We would focus our attention on the theological methodology and the content of a God-Man relationship, the two major pillars of a theological framework suited to India.

1. Christian theological methodology.

In 'theological methodology' we include mainly three things viz., outlook, approach and scriptural interpretation.

(a) Universal outlook:

By 'universal outlook' we mean the appeal and relevance of theology to the whole universe including humanity. The particular context should not obscure the ecumenical and universal dimensions of Christian theology. Contextual theology can soon become parochial if it becomes exclusively a particular context's affair. An eagerness to avoid the parochial spirit of contextual theology and giving an openness to accommodate every particular situation in a wider universal context is what 'universalism' means here. The effulgence of many 'theologies' in the modern period has the danger that they tend to preserve the situational identity at the expense of the universal Christian identity. Sometimes, even without concentrating on any context as such, Christian theology, in some questions takes 'the remnant' idea literally and thereby closes its eyes to a sympathetic understanding of other religions and ideologies. A universal outlook will take these facts seriously.

(b) Integral approach.

An integral approach to the dualities of metaphysics and epistemology must become the keynote of a Christian theological task in India. The apparent dualism or 'gap' between man and God, world and God, matter and spirit, body and soul, life and thought, has to be overcome by 'integrational'. The integral approach finds that in some cases the apparent dualism is only a false one and in some cases they are merely two aspects of the same reality. The most important implication of this integral relation between day to day life and spirituality or between the historical dimension and the transcendental dimension. Here, anthropology will become an integral part of theology as the science of God.

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(c) Hermeneutical openness

We cannot throw away the Christian scriptures in order to adjust to the Indian situation. But we have to evolve a method of scriptural interpretation suited to India (especially in relation to the place of scripture in the Indian religious tradition). Those who have attempted scriptural interpretation in the early centuries of Christian era, and those who have authentically interpreted the Hindu Scriptures in the modern period, have one feature in common i.e. a good measure of interpretative freedom while remaining firmly rooted in the living tradition.

The place of Scripture and its method of interpretation is a virtual issue in the Indian theological situation. The questions crucial in this respect are: whether Scripture has an absolute literal authority; whether we can substitute the O. T. with Indian Scriptures; and whether the Indian Scriptures should be held on an equal level with the Christian Scriptures. The Christian theological method would follow an interpretative approach which on the one hand will not support a literal inspiration of the Bible and on the other will not object to the usefulness of Indian Scriptures for an intelligible interpretation of the Biblical message. It can not ignore the Old Testament; but it will interpret it in such a way that God's plan for the whole universe would be illustrated through it. Deep rootage in the living tradition of the Church would be the main source for such a hermeneutical position.

2. A Christian theological outline for God-Man relationship.

(a) History: A progressive process:

A concept of History suited to Indian Christian thought will have to take seriously the Biblical understanding of history and the Indian classical understanding of the same. There is no accepted understanding of history agreeable to the Biblical scholars as well as to Indian scholars. It is the general western understanding that the Biblical view of history has a linear emphasis while the Indian classical conception of history has a cyclic emphasis. The linear emphasis presupposes a *progress* and the cyclic emphasis presupposes a *process*. In the ultimate analysis a process without progress and a linear progress without a cyclic framework will be difficult to defend. In fact, the Biblical understanding of history and the Indian 'process' concepts. Thus, if the progress is accommodated to a cycle (process) of Divine action (Christianity firmly believes that the Creation has its origin and destiny in God) and human responsibility is accommodated to God's plan for the universe, the concept of History will not remain purely linear or purely cyclic; rather, it will be a progressive process.

(b) Concept of God: new possibilities for Interpretation.

(i) An equal emphasis on the Being and Becoming aspects of God: a challenge to the traditional emphasis on the Being aspect.

Often, the emphasis on the Being aspect of God presupposes a transcendent God, and the emphasis on the Becoming aspect of God presupposes the immanent God. When theology becomes an academic affair, the 'Being' aspect dominates the field, where God becomes an idea more than a living experience. When theology becomes a tool in the hands of action groups, the 'Becoming' aspect dominates the field where God himself struggles through the human struggles. But these are two extreme positions that must be brought into a complementary relationship. When human struggles for the good can be seen in integral relation to God's action in the world, it has the surest claim to a positive Indian response. But God can not be limited to human actions. He transcends history, and calls this creation to a trans-historical destiny.

(ii) God: the source, support and destiny of the Creation—another premise for Christian Thought in India.

The West dominated thinking may have some difficulty in agreeing to this premise. But the early Patristic tradition and the Indian religious traditions agree to this without difficulty. In its central core, viewing God as the source, support and destiny would not contradict the Hebrew symbol-myth of creation. In fact, two insights from the Hebrew story of creation would only support this: viz., nothing came into being outside the will of God, life has its origin in the life of God Himself.

(iii) The three dimensional manifestation of God: a basis for communicating the Trinitarian concept in India.

The Christian doctrine of Trinity has been a stumbling block for many in understanding the concept of God. In the Indian context especially, this has been a most difficult subject for communication. There were attempts to communicate the Trinitarian concept by means of Hindu triads or through the Vedantic concept of Saccidananda. Trinitarian doctrine was not just a metaphysical creation of the early theologians. There was of course a Trinitarian experience of God at three dimensions viz., *Supra-cosmic*, *Cosmic* and *personal*. Such a three dimensional experience of God is almost common in all religious traditions, especially in India. Hence, it seems that the three dimensional experience of God could be a firm ground for further 'communication' of the trinitarian mystery.

(c) **Man and Earthly existence.**

(i) **Positive and realistic view of human life and its divine destiny:**

The Patristic tradition as well as the authentic Indian religious traditions have always fought against a dichotomous idea of man as soul and body. They also envisage the destiny of man as attaining the perfection of life or consciousness, in God. They advocate a positive and realistic view of life, considering that it is in and through this life that human destiny is attained. The enduring personality that transcends death and corruption, with its incorruptible body is central to Patristic anthropologies. Thus all spheres of life participate in the process of growing towards a transcendental destiny. It is this life and this personality that is to be transformed into higher levels of existence.

(ii) **Man-oriented soteriology and spirituality to replace soul-oriented soteriology and spirituality.**

Body-soul polarity leads to a soul-oriented soteriology and spirituality. It results in the divorce of spirituality from life and a limitation of salvation to an after-death incident. Though theology and philosophy would agree to 'the whole man' idea instead of a 'soul'.

(iii) **Integral relationship between man and universe.**

The conception of individual salvation in its extreme forms has separated man from the other realities of the universe. This is as true in the later phases of Christian thought in the West as in the later phases of Vedantic thought in India. But in early Patristic thought and in early Vedic thought we find an integral relationship between man and universe. In other words, the word 'universe' included man as its integral part. The unfortunate separation of man from the universe resulted in a wrong attitude of man towards his environment. Scientific advance based on such an attitude has at last come to the realisation that something is wrong somewhere. The ecological crisis has now acknowledged the point Teilhard de Chardin pointed out earlier:

"The time has come to realise that an interpretation of the universe—even a positivist one—remains unsatisfying unless it covers the interior as well as the exterior of things; mind as well as matter. The true physics is that which will, one day, achieve the inclusion of man in his wholeness in a coherent picture of the world."³

Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (Sixth Impression) London, 1960, p. 36

What the Indian Christian needs to bear in mind is beautifully brought out in the following words of the renowned Indian Orthodox theologian:

".....the creation itself is a consequence and manifestation of the gracious will of God, and therefore, the grace of God is present and active in the whole of creation".⁴

(d) **Christ and His Mission: some new emphases.**

i. **Christ 'the Mediator' to get greater emphasis than Christ 'the Reconciler'.**

A study of the understanding of Christ and His role in Indian circles will reveal one thing: in most of the west-dominated Christian circles, Christ is presented as the Redeemer from sin and judgement. As a result 'reconciliation' and 'justification' become more important than the concept of Divine sonship. Referring to the ideas of 'propitiation' and 'reconciliation' Chenchiah says that neither of these aspects would be meaningful in the Indian context where something more positive is really needed. The philosophical background of India would be better satisfied with a more philosophically based concept of Christ's mission. In this background the concept of a mediator, who is at the same time one both with the Creator and with the Creation would be more meaningful and relevant.

(ii) **Christ: the measure of perfect humanity.**

The incarnation was not just an identification with humanity, but an illustration of what humanity ought to be. In other words Christ was the perfect man, in whom there was the perfect union of the human and the divine. This conception is important in the context of many 'humanistic' Christologies in the Indian context. There is a temptation in most of them to take our humanity as a criterion for Christ's humanity. But Christ's humanity should become the criterion for our humanity. The significant feature of Christ's humanity is not only that it is fully transparent to the divine, but also a manifestation of the divine. Compared to this humanity, our humanity proves itself dehumanised. Such a christological emphasis will imply at least two things that are important in the Indian situation:

(1) **Perfection of humanity means union with the divine.**

4. T. Paul Verghese, *Freedom and Authority*, Lucknow, 1974, p. 86.

- (2) All humanistic philosophies aim at an imperfect humanism until they can aim at the perfect humanity in Jesus.

The first point shows how akin to each other is Christ-centered humanisation and deification. The second point shows the error in identifying all human struggles as Christ's struggles. When Christ is acknowledged as the measure of perfect humanity it has two main implications for the individual: (i) it reminds him that his *dehumanised* nature is due to sin, (ii) it calls him to genuine humanistic struggles as a step towards deification.

- (e) **Perfection through restoration: suggested central theme for a concept of God-Man relationship in the Indian context.**

- (i) **Elevation theme to get more emphasis than sin-forgiveness theme.**

Elevation theme integrates in it both the concept of Christ's salvatory work viz., restoration and perfection. The dehumanised or de-natured status of man and universe is first transformed to a perfect status by restoration and then they are transformed to the perfection of participating in the Divine life. In other words, according to the elevation theme wholeness is a condition (not an end) for perfection. When 'restoration' becomes integral to 'perfection' all ethical values and humanistic struggles become not only 'desirable' but also 'inevitable'. But on the other hand, if the sin-forgiveness theme is emphasised, salvation will become limited either to an ethical restoration or to a spiritual restoration or to a humanistic struggle-centered restoration.

- (ii) **Incarnation-Deification aspect to get more emphasis than the Cross-Redemption aspect.**

Unfortunately, in many Christian theological circles in India, the incarnational mission of our Lord is limited to the sacrificial death on the cross. As pointed out already, in such an interpretation there is only one motive—a restorative one. But many people in India hopefully ask with Chenchiah, ".....Is there any new advance for man in Jesus beyond regaining the ground lost"?⁵ It is in this context that Indian Christians should take the Incarnation-Deification theme of the early fathers more seriously. When they do, they can find many meeting points with the Indian concepts of salvation.

5. P. Chenchiah, *Kraemer Critique*, p.23

- (iii) **Renewed emphasis on the Sacramental mysteries: a way to integrate the transcendental and Historical Dimensions:**

Manifestation of the divine in human corporate existence, and the transformation of human corporate existence to higher levels of divinity, are the major philosophical assumptions behind a genuine sacramental theology. In the Indian context, these assumptions take on special significance because of many similarities".⁶ A corporate and Christ-centred mysticism was central to Christian liturgical life. Hence a renewed emphasis on liturgical and sacramental life and its value for missionary witness is crucial in an Indian theological setting. A new awareness that the whole of history is a manifestation of God and that the whole of existence is pervaded by God's Existence would have to govern the ethos of Indian Christian life. This would necessitate a wider and deeper interpretation of liturgical life and sacramental theology, especially the mystery of the Eucharist. Day to day life, the scientific development, interpersonal relationships and the spiritual life will attain a wholeness and harmony in a sacramental attitude which neither approves a 'materialist denial' or a 'refusal of the ascetic'. It would thus integrate the transcendental and historical dimensions of life. A sacramental outlook on life and its destiny would emphasise deifying humanisation or a humanising deification instead of a this-worldly humanisation or an other-worldly deification.

6. This fact is beautifully brought out by Raymond Panikkar's work 'Vedic Experience'.

A Panchsheel for Religions.

(Dr. Paulos Gregorios)

Religious differences have been a recurring pretext for wars through recorded history. Often, the root cause of these wars has plainly been economic while the immediate impulse for them came easily from a threat to religious identity. Religion is a deeply moving source of self-identity and group passions can be aroused most speedily by stirring up religious feelings. Which, for instance, was why a known atheist like Stalin decided, in the fight of the early Forties against the forces of Hitler, to appeal to the religious sentiments of the Soviet people, recalling their religious history, in his effort to rouse their patriotism and to steel their resolve to resist aggression.

But precisely because religion is a source and symbol of group identity, economic conflicts often take the form of a religious struggle. The clearest examples of this today are the Arab—Jewish confrontation and the fight in Northern Ireland between Catholics and Protestants. One group holds that the other is dominating and exploiting them.

The same is true of the Hindu-Muslim quarrels on our own sub-continent. It is the fear of being economically deprived and politically cheated that leads to community conflicts, communal riots and even civil war.

Normally, religion is a noble sentiment, an inspiring source of heroic sacrifice, of self-denial and of serving others, of mercy, peace and goodness. Yet it can be turned quickly into hatred, fanaticism and the most irrational kind of cruelty. This happens because people become in temperate and brutal in their attempt to demonstrate their strident loyalty to their own community or religious denomination.

We in India have thus to be watchful that our deep religious sentiments are not transformed into hatred and vengeance. For, we have not only the Hindu-Muslim rivalry, but also conflicts between Hindus and tribals, between Hindus and Christians, and so on. Most of these rivalries feed on misunderstandings, wilful distortions of one group by another, and, for too often, lack of mutual knowledge and understanding.

The time is now for the various communities to practise some ground rules for peaceful coexistence, a kind of *Panchasheel* for religions. These principles should not only be proclaimed but also be inculcated continuously by the leaders in their followers.

I propose five simple principles as a basis for further deliberation by a representative group of religious leaders and thinkers. These are *mutual respect, nondiscrimination, dialogue, resolution of conflicts by peaceful means, and co-operation in the service of humanity.*

Mutual respect between religions can be engendered by teaching each person to respect other religions as well as his own, never to speak hatefully of them and to learn what is best in each religion. The programme must be introduced in our schools and colleges, as well as into religious teaching schemes. It could also be advanced through public gatherings organised, say once a year, by all the religions together and addressed by their leaders.

Non-discrimination: It is a principle of our secular democracy that no man or woman shall be discriminated against because of his or her religion. This should apply not only to the rights of Harijans but also to those of the adherents of any religion. The minorities of this country fear, rightly or wrongly, that they are often kept out of key posts, or even common jobs, because of their religion. There should be a programme, overseen by a Lokpal, to look into allegations of this kind and to give unbiased verdicts. Naturally such a Lokpal would have to be a group of distinguished persons representing the various religions.

The principle of non-discrimination would naturally have to apply also to legislation. For example, the Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Bill (originally called Freedom of Indigenous Religion Bill) sought to discriminate between Hinduism and Sikhism as Indian-born religions on the one hand, and other religions like Islam, Christianity, and Judaism as imported religions on the other. If this principle were carried to its logical conclusion, no religion could go beyond its own national frontiers—including Hinduism. Similarly, the O. P. Tyagi Bill attempts to discriminate against certain religions by subtle devices like defining the "use of force" (which is forbidden for religious conversions) as use or threat to use force, including the threat of divine retribution. True, some West Asian religions do teach about God's divine judgement, but a secular State cannot legislate against such religions. Hinduism too has the doctrine of *Karma* which is a sort of divine retribution, and therefore to preach about *Karma* would be a violation of the Tyagi Bill's provisions. The principle of non-discrimination demands total vigilance.

Dialogue or Learning from Each other: All religions have a tendency to feel self-sufficient. People often think that all that needs to be known in terms of religion is already provided in the Scriptures and other writings of one's own religion. Experience has shown that when one sets out to learn deeply from other religions, one's understanding of one's own religion is transformed and deepened. We need

therefore to find ways in which at least the leaders and thinkers of each religion are exposed at depth to the teachings of other religions. It is at this level that dialogue between the various religions becomes essential, especially in the Indian context. One could also organize brief courses in our social and academic institutions where the best teachers of all religions talk to the same group of people.

Resolving Conflicts by Peaceful Means: There should be a national network of religious leaders committed to the ideal of religious and communal harmony, who will be vigilant about communal tensions in various parts of the country. They should take the initiative to engineer a meeting of the religious leaders of the locality as soon as tensions are spotted, in order to prevent a conflict from breaking out. Such panels could be organized on a district basis and closely associated with the Zila Parishad or the district administration. These could also help settle conflicts arising within just one religious group as well as conflicts between different religious groups.

These panels would work on a voluntary basis without remuneration, but will be given the necessary facilities and assistance by the district authorities including the police. Early detection of tension is of the essence of this programme. But if the district panel is of sufficiently high calibre it can help in the resolution of long-standing conflicts as well.

Inter-religious Cooperation in Service to Community:

All religions believe in selfless service to the needy—Why can't we then move forward to some measure of co-operation in this regard? For example, a few schools, hospitals, and other institutions of service to humanity can be jointly run by different religious groups. Why can't we put our resources together into some village development project? Ways and means for joint service are worth exploring. It will be recalled that for the Andhra Cyclone Relief or Bengal Flood Relief, various religions acted independently and somewhat competitively. Would it not have been an enduring witness to communal harmony, if we could have had at least a few projects of house-building or relief operations on a co-operative inter-religious basis?

These five principles may need to be supplemented or revised. In any case it will be good to make a start by calling together a meeting of religious leaders to explore possibilities of formulating principles and to begin building our national defences against communal disharmony.

News Reports

Pope Shenouda III, Official Visit to WCC (EPS).

Patriarch Shenouda III, the Primate of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt, made his first official visit to the WCC, in Geneva, on 8th February 1979. Addressing the staff of WCC, the spiritual leader of over six million Egyptian Copts praised the WCC's work for Christian unity; the world wide aid given to oppressed people, its activities for peace, and the encouragement given to witnessing to the Gospel in the different continents.

The 117th successor to the Evangelist St. Mark, with his throne in Alexandria took this occasion to confirm his church's ecumenical commitment and the concern to work for this cause and the general well-being of the Churches all over the world. 'We do not work for the Coptic Church, or for Egypt, but for the Gospel every where', he said.

Patriarch Shenouda III, who was accompanied by several dignitaries of his church, was welcomed to the Ecumenical Centre by the Rev. Dr. Philip Potter, general secretary of the WCC and senior staff. Dr. Potter noted that the Coptic Orthodox Church was one of the founder member churches of the WCC in Amsterdam in 1948, and added that this church "has always been concerned about the unity of God's people, as a sign and sacrament of the unity of all people in Christ".

Pope Shenouda, and his delegation, arrived from London where he had consecrated the first Coptic Church in the United Kingdom. During his stay in Geneva, he also took part in the opening of the work of the Commission for Inter-Church Dialogue with the ancient Oriental Churches, held at the Orthodox Centre in Chambesey, 7-11 February. He was also received by the civil and religious authorities of the Canton of Geneva.

The Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt is the oldest Christian Church on the African continent. The Evangelist St. Mark preached in the region of Alexandria in the late 50's A. D. It is believed that the first Church was built in the year 64. Today the Coptic Church has over six million faithful in Egypt and 53 bishops. There are Coptic communities in North and East Africa, in the states of Persian Gulf, the middle East, USA, Canada, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Great Britain and Australia.

W. C. C. Delegation Visits Ethiopia.

An ecumenical team sponsored by the W. C. C. spent nearly three weeks in various parts of Ethiopia in January and February. The team reported that there was "no evidence of systematic, nationally sanctioned persecutions of Churches and Christians because of their faith or religious practice". They report, however, that there are cases of actions against individuals who oppose the Government's new measures. Some are reported to be imprisoned without trial and even tortured. In some cases action has been taken also against churches and monasteries.

The socialist military revolution of 1974 has been a shock to the large and ancient Ethiopian Orthodox Church—with some 17 million members, more than 200,000 clergy, 900 monasteries and 16,000 churches. All land and buildings belonging to the Church were nationalised. The government still pays the salaries of bishops and of some administrative staff. The church is being entirely reorganized on a parish basis, from the local congregation up.

The W. C. C. has been helping with development projects under the previous regime; there were complaints about misuse of funds. The present team was exploring the possibilities of helping the Church in the new circumstances.

The Church has recently decided that 9 of its older bishops should retire from active administrative duties, giving major responsibility to coadjutor bishops to be newly consecrated. Thirteen such new bishops have recently been consecrated.

Revival of Monastic Life for Women in the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch:

Mrs. Elishbah Gulcan a member of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch recently wrote in an article in 'Sobornost' (Vol. VII No: 4, 1977) that there is a promising renewal of Monastic life in that Church. In the beginning of this century many monasteries were destroyed by the Muslim invaders and were emptied "so that eventually no one knew what a nun looked like". According to Mrs. Elishbah Gulcan, some young women are attracted by the past monastic heritage of the Syrian church. The present movement was initiated by an elderly lady named Zahra in 1960. She received the tonsure from Mar Iwannis, bishop of Tur Abdin, in the monastery of Mar Gabriel. From 1960 to 1976 fifteen sisters joined Mar Gabriel, the only surviving monastery for women in the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch. Out of the fifteen, two are serving in the Monastery of St. James in Salah (a little north of Midyat), two in the Monastery of Mar Melke in Mount Izla, and one in an orphanage and old people's home in Lebanon. "With the exception of the two

nuns who had learnt elementary Syriac in their parent's home, none of the nuns knew either Turkish or Syriac before they entered the monastery", writes Mrs. Elishbah.

The nuns do all kinds of work such as cooking, washing, serving, repairing vestments and habits, wine making, repairing of books including manuscripts, keeping of livestock.

Orthodox Youth Meets in Montgeron: (EPS)

SYNDESMOS, the international organization for Eastern Orthodox Youth will launch a project of sensitization under the title 'Witness and Service' by means of an international conference to be held from 29 August to 2 September, in Montgeron near Paris.

In 1978, it was decided to develop a three year project to enable Eastern Orthodox Youth from all countries, but particularly from the diaspora and Eastern European Countries to participate more actively in SYNDESMOS. This project includes six regional conferences, a World Orthodox Conference in 1980, and a sharing of experiences at an Ecumenical Consultation in 1981.

A total of 75 participants will take part in Montgeron mostly from about 30 Orthodox Theological Schools, organizations and movements, which constitutes SYNDESMOS, but including also Fr. Thomas Hopko, USA; Fr. Cyrille Argenti, France; Fr. Boris Bobrinskoy, France; and Metropolitan George Khodr, Lebanon.

Moscow:

Metropolitan Antony (Melnikov), previously of Minsk and Byelorussia, aged 55, has been installed as Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod, in place of the late Metropolitan Nikodim. Metropolitan Antony was professor at the Seminaries of Odessa and Saratov, and later rector of the Seminary of Minsk. He was consecrated bishop in 1964. He is well-known to the faithful of Russia as an intellectual of the old school and a man of culture. He has visited India, as a guest of the Orthodox Church of India.

The new Metropolitan of Minsk is Metropolitan Philarete, formerly of Berlin. He will continue as Exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate in Western Europe. Metropolitan Philarete was formerly Rector of the Moscow Theological Academy and is 43 years old.

Beirut.

The diocesan headquarters of the Antiochean Orthodox Church (Chalcedonian) in Mount Lebanon has been so seriously damaged by the war, that the bishop (Metropolitan Georges Khodr) has had to

move out to Broumana a village in the mountains. Metropolitan George said "It is above all the total insecurity, the poverty and the hate. 500,000 people are homeless; some of them live in tents, even in heavy rain; they are semi-starved. One cannot even try to repair the houses because of the insecurity and because there is not enough money". It is hard to forgive and be reconciled.

Bucharest, Romania. A mixed group for Orthodox-Roman Catholic conversations has decided on the main themes for discussion in the first stage. The list includes the following themes:—

1. The mystery of Christ as expressed and realized in the sacramental mystery of the Church. How is the sacramental nature of the Church to be understood in relation to Christ and in relation to the Holy Spirit? What is the relation between the sacraments and the mystery of Christ, the Spirit and the Trinity?
2. The Eucharist as central mystery (sacrament) of the Church.
3. The sacramental mysteries of initiation; their relation to the Unity of the Church.
4. The relation between Sacraments and the Canonical structure of the Church.
5. The faith and communion in the sacramental mysteries.
6. The sacraments in their relation with history and the final destiny of man and the world.
7. The sacramental mysteries and the renewal of man in the world.
8. Differences in ritual in the practice of the sacraments.

An Orthodox Deputy General Secretary for the World Council of Churches:

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in their meeting in Jamaica (January 79) appointed a Bulgarian Orthodox lay professor of theology as Deputy General Secretary. Dr. Theodore Sabev is expected to take charge of his new office in the summer of 1979; since the Indian Father Paul Varghese (present Mar Gregorios) resigned in 1967 from the post of Associate General Secretary of the W. C. C. this is the first Orthodox appointment to the General Secretariat. Dr. Sabev is also the first person to be appointed to the General Secretariat from eastern European Socialist countries. Dr. Conrad Reiser, a West German Evangelical is the other Deputy. A third Deputy Secretary is soon to be named, most likely a woman.

Book Review:

Paulos Gregorios, *The Human Presence: An Orthodox View of Nature*. World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1979, pp. 104.

It is a strange paradox that human beings are gasping for life-breath in our glorious urban-technological civilisation which was originally inspired by great humanistic ideals and nourished by the clear stream of human reason. That the civilisation is sick is a matter of no doubt. Among the many symptoms are the ecological and resource crises. But diagnosticians differ as to the exact nature of the pathogenic factors.

In the present work Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios of Delhi provides a refreshing re-interpretation of the crisis as the result of a fatal disruption in the authentic relationship between three realities: God, world and man. He thus critically reviews some of the ancient and contemporary attempts to deal with these realities. He moves on to elucidate in his characteristically stimulating, erudite and clear manner the classical Christian alternatives as represented by the thought of Gregory of Nyssa. He discerns the sense of the human presence in our cosmos in an original way that may not sound familiar to the Western tradition. The book concludes with a perceptive peep into the art of making images of the future and a plea for setting a new style of Christian ethical reflection and living based on a community effort to reconstitute our civilisation.

For 20th century prophets like Theodore Roszak "the religion of the Churches" is one among the several culprits who shaped our civilisation in the wrong way and contributed to the fatal reduction of everything to the 'single vision' of scientific rationality. It has now become almost customary to put the major responsibility for the environmental crisis on the Judeo-Christian tradition and its approach to the nature. Metropolitan Gregorios contends that while these assumptions are partially true, they also reveal an insufficient knowledge of some of the richer traditions of Christianity, less known in the West, which had always fostered a sacramental vision of reality and promoted a vital relationship between man, nature and the transcendent. His major effort in the present work is to bring the creative insights of that tradition to bear on the current debate on ecological crisis and open up a fresh dimension of reflection and experience for a possible way out of the present dilemma.

The mediatorial and participatory nature of man, argues the author, between the realities of God and world, as exemplified in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, has to be rediscovered in our times "The only humanity that can survive is the new humanity, the humanity that has now been inseparably, indivisibly united with God in Jesus Christ. And because of its locus in the one divine-human nature of Christ, the new humanity is a mediatory humanity—a humanity that reconciles and unites God and the world. It is an incarnate humanity—a humanity that is an inseparable part of the whole creation and inseparably united to the Creator." This is the theological ground for discerning the sense of the authentic human presence in the cosmos.

As the sub-title of the book suggests, there is a radical re-examination of the concept of nature in Christian and Indo-Hellenic cultures to rediscover the real nature of nature. The author argues that the exclusive understanding of 'nature' as the non-human part of universe which has contributed to the alienation of modern man is primarily Indo-Hellenic in origin and does not belong to the essence of the Judeo-Christian tradition as has often been assumed. There was never "a disacralization of nature" in the latter tradition since nature was never 'divine' in it. The basic distinction there was between the uncreated and self-existent being of God and the created, changing reality subject to death and disintegration which depended on God's being for its existence. This created nature, designated by the term *ta panta*, is a comprehensive reality including man and universe.

A brief but extremely interesting survey of the concept of nature in the medieval Western philosophy demonstrates how alienation began between humanity and the sub-human reality supposed to be unaffected by grace. The practice of objectification and "the impersonal gaze of a dead man's eyes" has its roots here. Although people like Renaissance writer Giordano Bruno strikes a different note the scholastic tradition of radical objectification is carried right into our own times in modern science. However perceptive scientists have begun to lose their over confidence as they discern the positivistic foundation of modern science shaking with the new research crossing over the Great Wall of scientific reason and entering the realm of irrational and the arcane. The counter culture syndrome has enhanced the self examination of the scientific-technological civilization. Mar Gregorios critically reviews the systems of Whitehead and Teilhard de Chardin as they claim to be modern alternatives to the classical metaphysics of the West. While recognizing the significance of these two as important landmarks in recent Western thought, he calls for a more sophisticated Trinitarian-Incarnational

doctrine which would correct and assimilate the dynamic Whiteheadian concept of God and a trinitarian economy of creation-redemption as the proper context for Chardin's inclusive view of humanity.

A brilliant summary of the cosmology of Gregory of Nyssa is presented as a creative Christian alternative. With erudite vigour and crystal-like clarity the author demonstrates how the thought of the fourth century Eastern Father could be astoundingly relevant to our contemporary issues. Gregory's notion of the infinity of God leads him to the radical vision of humanity and the whole cosmos participating in that infinity, though his basic distinction between uncreated infinity and participated infinity is still maintained. An infinite advance in the good is the dynamic and never-ending vocation of man and the universe.

Mar Gregorios brings out in detail the contemporary implications of the Gregorian concepts like *ousia* and *energia*, *diastema* and *metousia* etc. Humanity's role as the mediator between God and the world provides the principle of cosmic unity of all mankind. Thus the *pleroma* or fullness of humanity has cosmic implications. This cuts across our individualistic and alienating notions of man, society and nature. Man being the sensible icon of God can participate fully in the love and fullness of God, and through man the whole material creation enters into participation in the very nature of the Creator.

Mar Gregorios proposes a *reverent-receptive attitude* as a salutary complement to the objectifying-analysing attitude of contemporary scientific culture. The focus of the latter attitude has always been mastery over the forces of nature. This mastery is considered to be the highest form of knowledge in the secular, scientific *Weltanschauung*. The reverent-receptive attitude is "the attitude of being open to fundamental reality as it manifests itself to us through visible, audible, sensible realities in the creation". It is a form of intense communion with and participation in the mystery that unveils itself incessantly before us. This attitude can serve as a unifying force since it is not limited to scientific discovery alone, but cuts across the frontiers of literature, art, music, prayer etc. Mar Gregorios warns us with deep discernment: "The mastery of nature must be held within the mystery of worship. Otherwise we lose both mystery and mastery".

Delving into some of the avant-garde thinking in the world of science and drawing upon the significant experiences of people like Carlos Castaneda which begin to erode the traditional concepts in science, Mar Gregorios speaks about the art of making the images of the future. It has become a common place among perceptive scientists and thinkers that science is not as objective a system of knowledge as we once thought it was. It is one among the many

possible options. But we had blindly and with an irrational dogmatism limited our perception of reality to the rigid frame of scientific reason and technique. The author raises a major question for futuristics: "Are we going to project the future entirely and exclusively in terms of the limited possibilities of our science and technology, or are we prepared to conceive a future in which the full potentiality of human existence is taken into account?"

The author's vision of new humanity and the proposals for a new style of Christian ethical reflection are presented in the context of our world in which the appealing poverty of billions of people, the gross forms of injustice, boredom and loss of meaning among the affluent, the problems raised by the consumer society resource depletion, pollution, nuclear threats etc are haunting the inhabitants of our planet. A participating-reflecting community of charismatic person has to become the locus of a new spirituality. This spirituality can promote simplicity of living coupled with spontaneity and creativity. It will help overcome acquisitiveness and aggressiveness, creating a new *askesis* based on prayer, meditation and sacramental life. The community may give special attention to freedom from attachment to property, limits to privacy, productive activity, major emphasis on diaconal activity etc. New reflection and new patterns of living may emerge from such a community. Struggle for justice is part of such a community experiment. The community will set a model for others in that it will seriously take into account the realities of God, humanity and the world in its proper priority and mutual harmony.

Metropolitan Gregorios speaks to the urgent questions of our world standing in the unbroken tradition of a rich Christian heritage which combines conceptual thinking and Christian praxis as complementary to each other. The wisdom of the great Fathers consisted in the fact that great intellectual acumen and soaring heights of speculative brilliance were always mellowed with a deep sense of mystery, a loving care for the poor and the oppressed and a flaming passion for justice here and now. Our world badly needs a share of that wisdom, and *The Human Presence* is an invitation to share it.

(Rev. Dr. K. M. George.)

THE STAR OF THE EAST

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